REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated February 2, 2004. Claims 10-13 are presented for examination. Claims 1-9 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Claims 10-13 have been added to provide Applicants with a more complete scope of protection. Claim 10 is in independent form. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Claims 1-6 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,124,888 (*Terada et al.*), and Claims 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Terada et al.* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,909,247 (*Hosokai et al.*). Cancellation of these claims renders their rejections moot; however, Applicants will address the cited references with respect to Claims 10-13 as presented above.

The aspect of the present invention set forth in Claim 10 is an image pickup apparatus. The apparatus includes a sensor portion including a plurality of pixels, and an optical black portion including a plurality of optical black pixels. The apparatus also includes a scanning circuit effecting scanning for reading out signals of the sensor portion and the optical black portion, and a decoder for dividing the scanning circuit into a plurality of blocks and outputting a pulse to a desired one of the plurality of blocks causing scanning to start at the desired block. The scanning circuit and the decoder are arranged such that a signal is transmitted from the scanning circuit to the decoder causing the decoder to start operation thereof, after the scanning circuit completes the scanning for reading out the signal of the optical black portion. Support for the features of Claim 10

may be found at least at page 12, line 23 to page 13, line 1, the third and fourth embodiments of the present invention.[1]

Among other important features of Claim 10 is that the scanning circuit and the decoder are arranged such that a signal is transmitted from the scanning circuit to the decoder causing the decoder to start operation thereof, after the scanning circuit completes the scanning for reading out the signal of the optical black portion.

Terada et al. relates to an image pickup apparatus which has different read-out modes, such as block scanning mode, skip scanning mode, and all-pixel scanning mode (Figs. 25-29B). The block scanning mode of the *Terada et al.* apparatus is arranged so as to cause a scanning circuit to output a transfer pulse from a desired position (block) (column 12, line 64, to column 13, line 2, and column 14, lines 6-32). However, nothing has been found in *Terada et al.* that would teach or suggest that a scanning circuit and a decoder are arranged such that a signal is transmitted from the scanning circuit to the decoder causing the decoder to start operation thereof, after the scanning circuit completes the scanning for reading out the signal of the optical black portion, as recited in Claim 10.

Hosokai et al. is not seen to overcome the deficiencies of *Terada et al.* *Hosokai et al.* relates to an XY address solid-state image pickup apparatus having a pixel array of a plurality of pixels, two-dimensionally arranged. Nothing has been found in *Hosokai et al.* that would teach or suggest that a scanning circuit and a decoder are arranged such that a signal is transmitted from the scanning circuit to the decoder causing the decoder to start operation thereof, after the scanning circuit completes the scanning for reading out the signal of the optical black portion, as recited in Claim 10.

1/ It is to be understood, of course, that the claim scope is not limited by the details of the described embodiments, which are referred to only to facilitate explanation.

For at least the above reasons, Applicants submit that Claim 10 is clearly patentable over the cited prior art.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from independent Claim 10 discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

SECOND INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

In compliance with the duty of disclosure under 37 C.F.R. § 1.56 and in accordance with the practice under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.97 and 1.98, the Examiner's attention is directed to the documents listed on the enclosed Form PTO-1449. Copies of the listed documents are also enclosed.

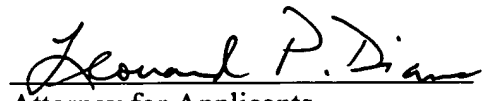
The concise explanation of the relevance of the non-English documents is provided in the English abstracts attached to the non-English documents.

This application has received an Office Action on the merits but has not yet received either a final action or a Notice Of Allowance. Accordingly, this Information Disclosure Statement is filed under 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(c) and is accompanied by the $180.00 fee specified at 37 C.F.R. § 1.17(p). Consideration of the art cited herein is accordingly deemed proper, and such action is respectfully requested. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that a copy of the enclosed Form PTO-1449 be returned indicating that such information has been considered.

CONCLUSION

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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